CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims by canceling claims 2-17 and adding new claims 44-50 as indicated below, all without prejudice, as indicated on the following listing of all the claims in the present application after this Amendment:

1-43.(Cancelled)

44.(New) A method of operating a memory system including a controller and a non-volatile memory, the non-volatile memory having a plurality of multi-cell units of erase, the method comprising:

establishing an initial set of metablock linkings by which the controller accesses the non-volatile memory, each metablock linking comprised of a plurality of units of erase and where the controller forms said initial set of metablock linkings according to a rule;

subsequently determining that one or more units of erase in a first metablock linking of the initial set of metablock linkings is defective;

updating the first metablock linking so that it no longer contains the defective unit of erase; and

storing a record of the updating of the first linking in the non-volatile memory, wherein the said record only includes deviations from the rule.

45.(New) The method of claim 44, wherein updating the first metablock linking includes replacing the one or more defective units of erase with non-defective units of erase.

46.(New) The method of claim 45, wherein said non-defective units of erase are selected from a list of unlinked units of erase.

47.(New) The method of claim 46, wherein said list of unlinked units of erase is maintained in the non-volatile memory.

48.(New) The method of claim 47, further comprising:

subsequent to said replacing the defective unit of erase with non-defective units of erase, updating said list of unlinked units of erase.

49.(New) The method of claim 45, wherein said non-defective units of erase is selected from a unit of erase formerly belonging to another linking.

50.(New) The method of claim 44, wherein said rule is implemented by firmware on the memory system.